

Town of Mansfield
CONSERVATION COMMISSION
Meeting of 17 November 2010
Conference B, Audrey P. Beck Building
MINUTES

Members present: Joan Buck (Alt.), Peter Drzewiecki (from 7:45), Neil Facchinetti (Alt.), Quentin Kessel, Scott Lehmann, John Silander. *Members absent:* Robert Dahn, Joan Stevenson, Frank Trainor.

1. The meeting was **called to order** at 7:32p by Chair Quentin Kessel.
2. The draft **minutes of the 20 October meeting** were approved as written.
3. **2011 meeting schedule.** In 2011 the Commission will meet, as usual, on the third Wednesday of each month.

4. Proposed revisions to subdivision regulations. The proposed revisions of the subdivision regulations discussed at the October meeting have been revised anew. The pre-application Site and Neighborhood Features Plan and Conceptual Yield & Layout Plans would now be referred to the Commission for comment (5.2(a)(2) and 5.2(b)). Promoting cluster development has been added to the list of objectives that the PZC may consider in deciding whether to permit or require common driveways (7.10(a)(3) and 7.10(b)(4)).

Silander observed that reducing forest edges is a desirable design objective that might be included in 7.10(b)(3). Lehmann wondered whether clauses 1-3 in 7.10(a) were to be read disjunctively or conjunctively. {The previous wording of 7.10(a) is disjunctive, as indicated by “or” in the first sentence.} He also wondered whether requiring the PZC to “consider” 1-4 in 7.10(b) before approving common driveways serving 4-5 lots was strong enough, suggesting that such approval require finding that allowing a common driveway to serve 1-2 additional lots would “significantly promote” some of the objectives 1-4. {To considerations 1-3 of 7.10(a), 7.10(b) adds vehicular and pedestrian safety.} After some discussion, the Commission agreed to suggest revising the second paragraph of 7.10(b) to read:

By a three-quarters (3/4) vote of the entire Commission (seven (7) votes), the maximum number of residential lots served by a common driveway may be increased to four (4) or five (5) lots, but only if the Commission finds that doing so would significantly (1) reduce environmental impacts, (2) enhance vehicular or pedestrian safety, (3) protect and preserve natural and man-made features, scenic views and vistas, interior forests, and/or other existing and potential conservation areas identified in the Plan of Conservation and Development (see map 21), or (4) promote cluster development and other design objectives of these regulations.

5. Agronomy Farm. After the 9/14 Town-Gown Committee meeting, the Storrs Heights Neighborhood Association submitted a number of follow-up questions to the University. The Dean of the College of Agriculture replied in a letter dated 10/28, indicating willingness to engage an independent hydrologist, if one could be hired at reasonable cost, but not to monitor neighborhood wells (too costly) or to test for a wide range of hazardous substances (ditto). The Neighborhood Association would like to negotiate a memorandum of understanding on agronomy farm water issues with the University, but the Town-Gown Committee appears to have lost interest and is now claiming it lacks jurisdiction.

6. Natchaug River Basin Conservation Compact. This document is still a work in progress, so the Commission is not yet in a position to recommend that the Town Council agree to it. Kessel distributed another draft, but the Commission deferred discussion to the December meeting, hoping that a final version would be available by then.

7. Open Space. Mansfield voters have approved \$1M bonding authority for open space over the next three years. Since it takes about two years to acquire land or conservation easements, the Open Space Preservation Committee is considering priorities. After some discussion, the Commission agreed unanimously (**motion:** Kessel, Silander) on the following general recommendation:

To maximize area protected per unit cost, the Open Space Preservation Committee and the Town should consider using a significant portion of the open space bonding authority to purchase development rights to interior forestland.

8. Adjourned at 8:52p. Next meeting: 7:30p, Wednesday, 15 December 2010

Scott Lehmann, Secretary, 18 November 2010; approved 15 December 2010.